

CERCOSPORA LEAF AND FRUIT SPOT OF AVOCADO

H. C. Burnett

Avocado, *Persea americana* Mill., is distributed throughout the tropical and subtropical areas of the world. In Florida, commercial fruit production is largely limited to Dade, Highlands, and Palm Beach counties (2), but individual trees are planted for fruit and shade around many central and south Florida homes (1).

Leaf and fruit spot, caused by *Cercospora purpurea* Cke., is one of the most important fungus diseases of avocado in Florida. In addition to the damage this fungus causes, the lesions may also serve as a means of entrance for the anthracnose fungus *Glomerella cingulata* (Ston.) Spauld. and Schrenk, and other disease organisms (3).

SYMPTOMS. On leaves, spots are small, usually less than 1/16 inch in diameter. They are angular in shape and brown in color. Spots often coalesce to form irregular blotches (fig- 1). Spores of the fungus are produced on both sides of the spots during moist periods throughout the year (3).

On fruits, the spots are generally 1/4 inch or less in diameter. They range from light to dark brown, are irregular in shape, and slightly sunken. The disease does not progress into the flesh; only the rind tissue is involved.

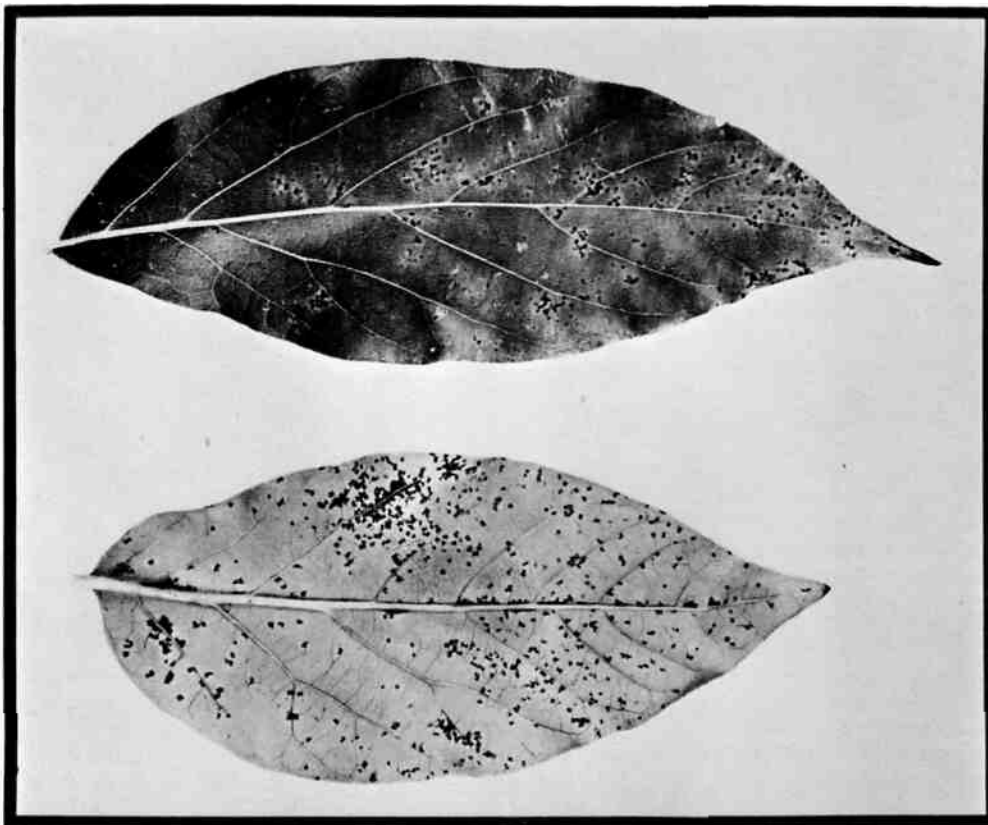


Fig. 1. Symptoms of *Cercospora* spot on top and bottom surfaces of avocado leaf,

CONTROL. The fungus overwinters on old diseased leaves; thus, the disease may become progressively more severe each year. Basic copper sulfate is suggested for control of Cercospora spot on the leaves and fruit (4). The first spray should be applied during the first part of May, and followed by 2 additional sprays at monthly intervals. A fourth application is suggested during the first half of September.

Literature Cited

1. Bush, C. S. 1969. Flowers, shrubs and trees for Florida homes. Florida Dept. Agr. and Consumer Serv. Bull. 195. 179 p.
2. Malo, S. E., and C. W. Campbell. 1972. The avocado. Univ. of Florida, Inst. of Food and Agr. Sci., Fruit Crops Fact Sheet No. 3. 4 p.
3. Ruehle, G. D. 1943. Cause and control of Cercospora spot and of anthracnose of the avocado. Univ. of Florida Agr. Exp. Sta. Press Bull. 583. 4 p.
4. Univ. of Florida, Inst. of Food and Agr. Sci. 1971. Plant disease control guide, p. III-2.